

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 COME-00

EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /098 W

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R 260715 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 603

INFO CNO WASHDC

USNAVCOMSTA HAROLD E HOLT

DOD WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 1717

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, MARR, PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR SITUATION AT
NORTHWEST CAPE STATION

REF: CANBERRA 1673

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS AND, ULTIMATELY, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, CALLED EMBASSY THROUGHOUT PAST WEEKEND IN MOUNTING CONCERN ABOUT SUBJECT DISPUTE IN WHICH LABOR LEADERS HAD THREATENED WALKOUT OF ALL AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYEES AT BASE. AFTER CONSULTATION STATION COMMANDER, CAPTAIN CUNNINGHAM, WITHDREW MEMORANDUM REGARDING VOLUNTARY TAKING OF LEAVE WITHOUT PAY BY AUSTRALIAN WORKERS AT STATION. THIS WAS CARRIED ON NATIONAL NEWS BROADCASTS. EIGHT- MEMBER TLC DELEGATION FROM PERTH HEADED BY SECRETARY JAMES COLEMAN ARRIVED AT STATION MARCH 25 AND PLAN TO STAY TO MARCH 27, DURING WHICH TALKS ON LABOR RELATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE WITH CAPT. CUNNINGHAM. END SUMMARY.

2. DCM WAS CALLED BY SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS DURING 24- HOUR PERIOD BEGINNING EVENING MARCH 23. FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKENEY OF DEPARTMENT OF
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD TWO POINTS TO MAKE: A) WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT POSSIBLE SERIOUS EFFECTS OF LABOR DISPUTE AT STATION ON WHILE QUESTION OF U. S. BASES WAS KNOWN AT APPROPRIATE LEVELS IN WASHINGTON AND B) THAT WHAT APPEARS REASONABLE AND LEGAL WITHIN CONTEXT OF CAPT. CUNNINGHAM'S RESPONSIBILITIES, MIGHT NOT BE ACCEPTABLE IN LABOR UNION PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE. LATER MARCH 24 DEFENSE MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BARNARD CALLED TO POINT OUT SITUATION WHICH COULD DEVELOP AT VICTORIAN STATE ALP ORGANIZATION MEETING NEXT DAY AT WHICH PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM WAS TO ADDRESS MEETING ON U. S. AND JOINT FACILITIES IN AUSTRALIA. BARNARD SAID THAT HE AND PRIME MINISTER INTENDED TO STAND FIRMLY IN SUPPORT OF U. S. FACILITIES BUT THAT THEY WOULD BE IN " UNTENABLE" POSITION IF LABOR DISPUTE EXISTED AT NORTHWEST CAPE AT TIME OF MELBOURNE MEETING. IN SUBSEQUENT CONSULTATION CAPT. CUNNINGHAM DECIDED TO WITHDRAW MEMORANDUM AND MAKE WITHDRAWAL KNOWN TO TLC SECRETARY COLEMAN IN PERTH.

3. EVENING MARCH 25 TLC TEAM ARRIVED AT EXMOUTH. CONVERSATIONS WITH SHOP STEWARDS AND COMMANDER ARE NOW GOING ON THERE. PROBABLE POINTS UNDER DISCUSSION ARE ALLEGATIONS THAT USN PERSONNEL HAVE IN SOME CASES TAKEN OVER WORK OF EMPLOYEES ON LWOP AND DEMANDS THAT EMPLOYEES ON LWOP BE PAID FOR TIME SO ABSENT. WILL REPORT FURTHER.
RICE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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